CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 3 July 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Bogumil Sujka (Poland)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 561st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I wish to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and myself, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, His Excellency Markus Meckel, who will address this plenary meeting. In addition to his important responsibilities, the Minister is a political figure engaged in the search for an effective framework which would ensure security for all in Europe. His role is crucial to the success of the endeavours to achieve that objective. This development will have considerable influence on the work of our Conference, in which the delegation of the German Democratic Republic has actively participated. I am sure that the statement of the Minister will be followed by all members with special interest.

Allow me now, at the beginning of the presidency of Poland for the month of July, to read a message addressed to the Conference by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Professor Krzysztof Skubiszewski:

"The Republic of Poland has the honour to assume this month the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Towards the end of the six-year period that has elapsed since Poland last held this responsible function, profound changes have taken place in the life of Poland and its people, as well as in the life of the international community. We have entered a new stage in international relations.

The improvement of the international atmosphere is bearing fruit in various parts of the world. Hotbeds of wars and many regional conflicts are being extinguished. The United Nations mechanisms, including the prerogatives of the Secretary-General, are being utilized to an increasing extent. States are striving to base international relations on mutual respect for their rights and responsibilities and on the strict observance of the principles of morality and international law. A conviction that military power can no longer be viewed as a basis for maintaining peace and international security is paving its way in the interdependent world of today.

It is, though, the European continent where these transformations abound as a result of positive developments in Eastern and Central Europe. My country played a leading role in inspiring those developments. Confrontation and rivalry are giving way nowadays to co-operation and partnership. Divisions are disappearing, and the unity of the continent is becoming a realistic vision.

Changes in the international situation have had significant impact on progress in the disarmament process. The disarmament dialogue between the United States and the USSR has already resulted in the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate - and Shorter-Range Missiles and, for the first time, makes the reduction of the strategic potentials of both countries a realistic prospect. The dialogue has also been conducive to achieving progress in other areas such as chemical weapons. The recently-concluded agreement on the destruction and non-production of these weapons is of vital importance for the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Intensive negotiations are also under way in Europe on the

reduction of conventional armed forces and on the next generation of confidence-building measures. Efforts are being made to secure greater openness on military activity, an example of which is the discussion on military doctrines and the negotiations on the "open skies" régime.

Disarmament continues to be one of the greatest challenges confronting the world. It is an important element of any stable system of international security. The Conference on Disarmament, the only universal forum for disarmament negotiations, has an important role to play in this regard. That is why we welcome efforts aimed at increasing its efficiency so as to keep pace with other, bilateral or regional, negotiations.

The advanced state of negotiations on the convention on the elimination of chemical weapons and a favourable political climate amplified by the recent actions of the two major possessors of these weapons permit me to conclude that the Conference on Disarmament is capable of finalizing its work on the convention in the very near future.

Poland actively participates in the efforts towards this goal. The Polish Government reaffirms its readiness to be among the original signatories of the convention. Poland also wishes to declare its willingness to abide by the provisions of the convention prior to its entry into force. My country neither produces nor stockpiles chemical weapons. It has no intention of doing so. We are prepared to accept - on the basis of reciprocity - verification of declared data with respect to all Polish military facilities, as well as the chemical industry and business activities within the scope of the convention.

Poland also attaches importance to other items on the agenda of the Conference, including the questions of a nuclear weapons test ban and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

I wish to convey my best wishes to all the delegates and to express the hope that our patient search for solutions and the building of wide platforms of understanding will be conducive to reaching specific results in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed): Krzysztof Skubiszewski,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Poland".

That concludes the message of His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland.

As President of the Conference, I wish to extend to Ambassador Oswaldo de Rivero of Peru our appreciation of the skilful and effective manner in which he discharged his responsibilities as my predecessor. Ambassador de Rivero will soon assume another important task, that of President of the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I wish him every success and am sure that his competence and experience will be of considerable value for the participants in that Conference.

Allow me now to make some brief comments on those matters relating to organizational arrangements which are before the Conference. I have in mind in the first place the important question of agreeing on a mandate for an ad hoc committee on agenda item 1, "Nuclear test ban". Ambassador Donowaki of Japan has actively continued his consultations on that subject and, thanks to his able and untiring efforts, there is a widespread feeling that we are not far from agreement. At the same time, an element of urgency is becoming more evident. I do hope that, with the co-operation of all of us, Ambassador Donowaki will succeed in his endeavours. Of course, I am available to support him whenever he would consider it appropriate.

Another subject being addressed by the Conference deals with its improved and effective functioning. Under the skilful chairmanship of Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan, the informal open-ended consultations are providing a useful framework for the consideration of a number of subjects which may streamline and update our organizational practices in the light of the new political developments in the international system. The frank and co-operative exchange of views held in those consultations is promising. We should take advantage of this positive atmosphere to agree on practical measures which will facilitate our work on substantive issues.

Lastly, may I note that I remain at the disposal of delegations on any matter which might be brought to the attention of the Chair.

We shall now proceed with the order of business for today.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference begins today its consideration of agenda item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". However, in accordance with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I wish to recall that, in accordance with the timetable for this week, the Conference will hold today an informal meeting on the substance of agenda item 2, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

I have on my list of speakers today the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, His Excellency Markus Meckel, to whom I take pleasure in giving the floor.

Mr. MECKEL (German Democratic Republic) (translated from German): Mr. President, I want to thank you for the warm words of welcome which you addressed to my country and to me personally. I am very happy to be among the first to congratulate you, the representative of Poland, on assuming the presidency of this important forum. The people of Poland have to their credit a decisive share in the democratic transformations in Eastern and Central Europe. They sent out an important signal by rising up against the dictatorship.

The relations between Germany and Poland were for centuries marked by hate, enmity and wars. The Germans participated several times in the division of Poland and inflicted serious damage on it. You may rest assured that we have drawn the lessons from this sorrowful history. Poland's interests will be taken into account in the process of German unification. This was among the reasons for my first visit abroad, which took me to Warsaw.

I wish you much success, Mr. President, in coping with the considerable responsibilities that lie ahead of you in the crucial month of the summer session.

Mr. President, esteemed delegates, the first freely-elected Government of the German Democratic Republic expressed its commitment to disarmament right from the outset. It seeks to advance the disarmament process in the course of unification and will continue to do so following unification. This Government has its origins in the revolution of autumn 1989, in which the movement for human rights and peace played an outstanding role. I shall endeavour to incorporate the human values and political objectives of this movement into the new political system of our country and to contribute them to a united Germany soon.

It is a comprehensive understanding of security which lies at the basis of the policies of the Government of the German Democratic Republic in the international arena. Our concerns include not only military questions but also disarmament and human rights, environmental protection and the social and economic development of all.

Geneva is symbolic in this respect for the people of our country, too. Located in the heart of Europe, it was for centuries a place of tolerance, offering a sanctuary to those persecuted on religious and political grounds. The city's great son, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, made a lasting impact on mankind's stock of democratic ideas with his Social Contract. Great hopes have been pinned on the Geneva-based United Nations agencies responsible for human rights and social and economic issues, and on the disarmament talks in progress here. This conference plays a major role as what is still the only multilateral negotiating forum devoted to global disarmament, but Geneva at the same time is the place where the World Council of Churches and the International Red Cross have their headquarters and from where important impulses go out into the world.

The revolutionary events of autumn 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe did not only put an end to ossified social and political structures. They also opened up new opportunities for disarmament by overcoming the ideological division of Europe and putting an end to the cold war. The German Democratic Republic intends to play its full part both by assuming unilateral commitments and by taking an active part in the talks in Vienna and here in Geneva. In the period that remains up to the establishment of the unity of Germany, the Government of the German Democratic Republic will be pressing for tangible and verifiable steps designed to usher in a qualitatively new stage in European disarmament politics.

The cessation of weapons' manufacture and reductions in the strength of the armed forces bring considerable social and economic problems in their wake for the German Democratic Republic. In order to alleviate them, conversion programmes have been elaborated and work is being continued thereon. A conversion office is being set up to co-ordinate the relevant economic and social processes. An institute responsible for the conversion of the armed forces was set up only recently to deal with the broader conditions for conversion in security policy and economic terms, and also personnel questions, military hardware, ecology and verification.

We are ready to co-operate with you and to take up existing experience in this area. We are looking forward with great expectations to the conversion conference which the United Nations and the Soviet Union will organize in Moscow in August.

Transparency and openness in military affairs and parliamentary control are becoming integral elements of our day-to-day political practice. This year, the German Democratic Republic has for the first time participated in the United Nations standardized report system on military expenditures and laid open its budget data for 1989.

The interest which German unification has aroused worldwide is understandable. German unification is not only a matter for Germans but at the same time a matter concerning Europe as a whole. However, nobody should be afraid of it. What we are aiming at is a united Germany that will never again be able nor seek to become a centre of military power; we want a Germany that constitutes a factor of peace and stability.

We favour a drastic cut in all German armed forces. The two German States should, in our view, declare their preparedness to reduce markedly German armed forces. The ceiling for the armed forces of a united Germany could be some 300,000 men to begin with. This would mean halving the present combined troop strength of the Bundeswehr and the National People's Army. The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic should propose to tne States participating in the Vienna CFE talks the inclusion of this ceiling in the negotiations under way. We are convinced that such an initiative, which should be endorsed by the two German States and also by NATO countries as well as the other States involved therein, would substantially facilitate further work.

The German Democratic Republic has renounced the production, proliferation and possession of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and would like to see an article to the same effect included in the constitution of a unified Germany. Chemical weapons as well as all nuclear weapons have to be withdrawn from German soil. It is our objective that a future Germany should resolutely stand up for disarmament in Europe and the world at large. Part of the arms spending by the two German States could be used to fund an all-German development policy. Over and above this, I support the proposal made by Willy Brandt and the Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker to make available one third of the resources saved in the future through armament cuts for economic growth in developing countries.

The legitimate security interests of our neighbours will be taken into account in the process of German unification. This refers particularly to the frontier question. Territorial claims and disputes about frontiers led to wars all too frequently in the past. Our attitude on the frontiers of a future Germany is clear: they will coincide with the current external frontiers of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. A united Germany will have no territorial claims against other States. That has recently been declared by the Parliaments and notified to Poland by the Governments of both the German States.

The process of German unification is part and parcel of the pan-European unification process. The key in both cases is disarmament and the creation of new security structures in the framework of the CSCE.

Rapid agreement at the Vienna talks on the reduction of conventional armed forces and armaments would be an important step in this direction. Given the political will, an initial accord can be reached by autumn. Closely associated with this, a mandate could be given for the talks to be continued with a view to achieving drastic force reductions and restructuring armed forces so as to limit them to purely defensive capabilities. What we are seeking is a pan-European security system with ever fewer military functions.

It is a crucial link in the chain to sort out the external aspects of German unification. Sensible solutions considering the interest of all sides will advance like a catalyst the creation of a pan-European order marked by peace, by democracy and by co-operation. No side must be put at a disadvantage in this process. It is in the interests of Germany, Europe and the world at large that Germany be firmly integrated in a future pan-European security system.

Such a security system can be built on what already exists. What might be used in the first stage, apart from the CSCE process, are existing institutions like the Council of Europe and the European economic organizations, the European Communities and NATO.

NATO in particular, must discard the ballast of the post-war period. It is in this spirit that the German Democratic Republic is contributing to a fundamental change in the character, functions and activities of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, as decided at the recent meeting of its Political Consultative Committee. The Warsaw Treaty Organization will only be in a position to meet the tasks facing it in connection with disarmament and the transition to a pan-European security system if it takes on a political function of identifying common interests. Another element of this transition is the reduction of launchers, nuclear-capable artillery and nuclear warheads by the end of the year, as announced in Copenhagen recently by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

But NATO, too, must change, clearly abandoning military functions in favour of political ones. Nuclear first use, forward defence and follow-on forces attack strategies and new long-range nuclear stand-off weapons have no place in the new Europe, which has left behind the policy of deterrence and the cold war. The first practical steps in this direction are encouraging. The decision by United States President George Bush against a successor system to the Lance and the modernization of nuclear artillery shells is to be welcomed.

We are looking forward with high hopes to the results of the NATO summit next month. The transformation of the military alliances is indispensable if the establishment of a just and lasting order of peace in Europe coupled with suitable security guarantees is to begin now. As early as 1967, NATO, in adopting the Harmel Report, set itself the objective of achieving a just and lasting order of peace in Europe that would include suitable security guarantees. Major conditions now exist for attaining this goal. The historic moment, in our view, calls for a political signal of similar importance, a signal that will add to the vision of 1967 concrete ideas and proposals on ways of putting it into practice, so that the way is cleared for gradually overcoming the situation whereby the CSCE States deter each other.

We believe that the security alliance to which Germany is to belong in the future must have a primarily political character expressed in unambiguous terms. Its foremost task ought to be the prevention of war through the organization of disarmament on our continent and through the establishment of a pan-European security structure.

I can imagine that a united Germany belonging to such a changed NATO in a co-operative security system as a successor to the German Democratic Republic will take part in a consultative mechanism together with the Warsaw Treaty States provided that it has developed such a political function. This would pose no problems if both alliances no longer confronted each other as enemies but were gradually proceeding to new forms of co-operation in security policies. This would even hold true if the Warsaw Treaty would collapse.

New approaches are required in efforts to achieve the security system we aspire to.

One idea would be the conclusion, in the CSCE framework, of a security treaty providing for the creation of a pan-European security union. Such a treaty could build on the principles of the United Nations Charter and of the Helsinki Final Act, imposing on the parties the obligation to keep the peace among themselves and towards others, and to assist each other in case of treaty violations. The parties could also commit themselves to abide by procedures for the settlement of disputes, to observe transparency and verification methods in the military field, and to give a defensive character to their national security concepts and structures.

Such a step would be in line with the best traditions of European humanitarian thought. Almost 200 years ago already, Immanuel Kant, in his treatise Perpetual Peace, voiced the hope that it would be possible to develop human reason in such measure that it would plainly rule out war as a legitimate course of action while making peace an absolute duty, which "cannot be effected or guaranteed without a compact among nations".

Kant, at that time, advocated a "pacific alliance". We are faced with the need today to institutionalize the CSCE process, especially in the field of security policy. There are a good many ideas on how to do this. Only recently the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Poland and the German Democratic Republic submitted a relevant joint proposal to the other CSCE participating States. Experience gathered on other continents should also be taken into account. I am thinking, for instance, of the OAS and the OAU.

A consensus is emerging in favour of a CSCE foreign ministers' council with a permanent secretariat, a verification agency, and a body for crisis management and the settlement of disputes.

The beginnings of such bodies are already developing. A verification agency, for example, could build on the inspections envisaged in the Stockholm Document, on the verification system that will emerge from the Vienna talks and on the air surveillance system being sought at the Open Skies Conference. Other proposals that could be taken up concern verificaion by satellite and a communications system linking the CSCE capitals.

Moreover, practical requirements of the disarmament process might make it advisable to create a European agency for arms conversion.

A summit meeting of the CSCE States later this year should give concrete shape to the progress on the road to a European security system and provide an impetus for its further shaping. Far-reaching decisions could then be taken at another summit in 1992.

For us, Europe is not an end in itself. The ending of the East-West conflict and the positive developments on this continent should also lend momentum to security, disarmament and co-operation on a global scale.

It is also clear, however, that a favourable course of development and lasting peace in Europe are possible only if progress is made on the global issues facing mankind as a whole.

For the first time in European post-war history there is a chance today of creating within the CSCE framework a regional security system along the lines of article 52 of the United Nations Charter. This will promote the effective implementation of the global security system on the basis of the Charter.

The disarmament and confidence-building measures expected to be forthcoming in Europe in the near future will create favourable conditions for disarmament efforts in other regions and the world as a whole. New possibilities are opening up on a broader front for closing the North-South gap, for establishing a more just world economic order, for reducing military arsenals and arms exports.

The implementation of the INF Treaty is entering its final stage. It will have to be followed by further steps towards nuclear disarmament. The conclusion of a START treaty is expected before the end of this year. Further substantial reductions have been announced in Soviet and American nuclear arsenals.

Talks are in sight on tactical nuclear weapons. It is becoming time for the other nuclear-weapon Powers to get involved in the process of nuclear disarmament. A halt to the manufacture of nuclear weapons is another point which should be put on the agenda.

There is a considerable wealth of experience to rely on with regard to all the steps mentioned above. The verification procedures developed in Soviet-American agreements and talks in the past, the co-operative testing of verification methods and techniques commenced by both sides and the safeguards system for nuclear materials used by the International Atomic Energy Agency for decades are of invaluable significance to the continuation of the nuclear disarmament process.

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament could help advance this process by discussing conceptional issues with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States. This being so, I should like to encourage you to carry on with the informal talks on this issue started at the spring session.

The Conference on Disarmament should also help prevent an arms race in outer space. Confidence-building measures in outer space adopted on a multilateral basis would constitute an effective supplement to Soviet-American talks.

A total nuclear test ban continues to be of the utmost relevance to nuclear disarmament. The recent agreements reached between the USSR and the USA with a view to putting into effect their treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear tests and on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes are important and should soon be followed by further agreements on the reduction of the number and yield of such tests.

We are also in favour of preparing the ground in a multilateral framework for a comprehensive nuclear test ban. This is what pressure groups all over the world expect your Conference to do.

The international seismic data exchange system for global test-ban monitoring developed by the Group of Scientific Experts has provided an important foundation for more substantial political advances. This has led to the German Democratic Republic taking part in the international experiments for the exchange of complete seismic registrations. Now the time has come for the Conference to start a comprehensive discussion about all issues involved in a test ban.

We consider the convening for early next year of an Amendment Conference to the Partial Test Ban Treaty, which was signed in Moscow in 1963, to be an expression of the world-wide interest in a speedy termination of nuclear test explosions. This conference must lend momentum to the relevant activities on all levels.

Progress in this direction would also go a long way towards strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, whose Fourth Review Conference will soon start its work in Geneva. It is the first time that such a gathering will be held against a background of nuclear disarmament. I regard this as an omen of success. It should set the course for an extension of this essential treaty in five years' time.

In many United Nations resolutions and declarations the international community has come out in favour of complementary disarmament talks at the bilateral, regional and global levels. However, a glaring contrast has become apparent of late between rapid progress in Soviet-American and European talks, on the one hand, and a failure to make sufficient use of global bodies, on the other.

The prohibition of chemical weapons, which is an issue of the utmost priority, especially here at this Conference, constitutes the only exception so far.

By speedily finalizing a convention, your Conference would make a substantial contribution to the process of disarmament, lending it a global dimension. A universal ban on these weapons of mass destruction would constitute the best foundation for harnessing chemistry, free from distrust, to the advantage of all States and peoples.

Much has been accomplished in recent years. The agreement signed in Washington to reduce the CW arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States is generating fresh momentum. The agreed termination of the manufacture of chemical weapons is a landmark decision that may become the starting point for practical action to finalize the convention shortly.

I would like to submit the following suggestions for consideration:

First, could not the other States owning chemical weapons also cease to manufacture these weapons of mass destruction and provide information about their stockpiles?

Second, could not all other States renounce the acquisition of chemical weapons and declare that? Even before the convention takes effect the non-proliferation of chemical weapons must become a well-established law of international life;

Third, could not the participants in the Disarmament Conference seize the unique opportunity of the international climate to intensify their work for the banning of all chemical weapons?

And finally, should not every effort be made even today to make the convention a truly universal agreement after its completion?

The treaty will truly be effective if it bans chemical weapons outright, thus enhancing the security of all parties and of the world at large.

As we see it, the purpose of a reliable system of verification would be to ensure compliance with the treaty and to build confidence.

It must be effective as well as cost-effective and realistic. For this reason we support efforts to improve the monitoring of civilian chemical industry through ad hoc inspections so that the international community may be certain that no chemical weapons are being produced.

Inspections on challenge that may take place at any time and at any place remain a last resort for settling problems relating to compliance with treaty provisions. Given the sensitive nature of this issue, it will be necessary to find prudent and well-balanced solutions. The proposal put forward in April by the Chairman of the Chemical Weapons Committee marks such an approach to this key political question.

Negotiations should, at any rate, focus on the still open key issues, notably in the domain of verification. They must not get bogged down in technical details of secondary importance, which can be resolved even after the conclusion of the convention.

Surely, it would be appropriate now to conduct the negotiations without any major interruptions to the point where the convention can be concluded. The Committee Chairman should receive the necessary mandate.

What counts in the period ahead is the will to succeed. On balance, it would seem that the time has come: to reach a fundamental understanding on those basic obligations under the convention which have been more or less finalized; to map out the road for the solution of questions that remain open;

to fix a time-scale for the final stages of the work. The forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly could be the proper forum for reaching such an agreement. I believe that the objective of banning a whole class of weapons of mass destruction justifies the effort.

The increased number of participants, attributable to the presence of new observers this year, will make for a wider representation of interests and for greater international acceptance of the convention. Simultaneously, the dialogue on accession should be conducted within a regional framework. We are in touch with member States of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and of NATO. Australia has set a good example with the initiative it has taken. The commitment of the general public - I am thinking of the recent seminar on chemical weapons of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in the Middle East - also deserves our respect.

It is beyond any doubt that the two German States or a united Germany will sign the convention as soon as it has been finalized. This is, among other things, our debt to history. It was German troops who were the first to employ chemical weapons at Ypres in 1915.

I would like to assure you that the German Democratic Republic will continue to play an active part in the negotiations as long as it exists and will take its commitment into a united Germany. We will give others the benefit of our experience from trial inspections and from the development of verification technology, and we are prepared to take further confidence-building measures. Let me tell you that my delegation chairing a working group will do its utmost to promote the solution of such important aspects of the convention as sanctions and the resolution of disputes.

Together with the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic will make arrangements for the implementation of the projected convention in a united Germany.

In the shape of the Biological Weapons Convention, an agreement to ban an entire class of mass destruction weapons has been in force for 15 years. If the convention were strengthened by verification measures, this would surely have a major effect in terms of confidence-building. This is what we expect the next Review Conference to do. Scientists in my country want to contribute to this goal by arranging an international colloquium on the prevention of a biological and toxin arms race, due to be held at Kühlungsborn, German Democratic Republic, in September this year.

At this time of momentous political changes, the Disarmament Conference is faced with growing demands. Alongside bilateral and regional mechanisms, it assumes an irreplaceable role with respect to multilateral negotiations. So your responsibilities are very great indeed. May the work that lies ahead of you be crowned with success.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to thank His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to my country and to me.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? This does not seem to be the case.

I wish to inform the Conference that Ambassador Ledogar of the United States and Minister Batsanov of the Soviet Union have jointly offered the participation of their strategic arms negotiators, Ambassador Richard Burt and Ambassador Yuri Nazarkin, in the informal CD meeting next Tuesday, 10 July. Ambassadors Burt and Nazarkin would plan to make informal remarks on various issues in the strategic arms negotiations, after which there will be a question and answer period. I am sure that the members of the Conference welcome this offer and will be very happy to listen to the remarks of both negotiators, as well as to hold a question and answer period on the strategic arms negotiations. I am looking forward to the participation of Ambassadors Burt and Nazarkin at our informal meeting on 10 July.

As I noted at the opening of this plenary meeting, the Conference will hold, immediately afterwards, an informal meeting on the substance of agenda item 2.

I recognize the distinguished representative of Austria.

Mr. KEMPEL (Austria): Mr. President, concerning your remarks on the invitation of Ambassadors Burt and Nazarkin, you said that it will be an informal plenary. I just wanted to express the interest of my delegation in participating and inquire whether it is also possible for other observer delegations to be present.

The PRESIDENT: It has just been explained to me by the Secretary-General and his deputy that those delegations which have applied for participation in informal sessions of the Conference are very welcome.

I have no other business for today and I intend now to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 5 July, at 10 a.m.

The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.